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796 This ritual might have brought Gedeonsu, or Tinné—
797 whoever was called. The two could not, however, be taken
824 at the same time, for one of them had to be left to care for the child Dyombie. If two of the kankan tree gods were wanted, then mother and child, or father and child, would be sought.

824 "The kankan tree spirits are not bad, but people fear
797 them. They are not as bad as the Akatasi gods."

The Akatasi gods were those which animated the kato liana, and were related to the gods of the ant hill. This kato bush was a terrible parasite which, getting its strangle hold on a tree, would rise higher than the tree itself and at last kill it.

The silk-cotton, however, was a friendly tree and cruel only when its spirits were tampered with by those who did not know how to control the gods. When the ancestors came into this river, which "in early days was only a creek," it was they who had sought out these trees, and had made their villages where they stood. Now the trees had become great, and the villages were great.

Here was the silk-cotton tree at S'ei, one of the greatest of all. Its roots made ridges in the path to the village. Under the spiritual guard they spread, and to the large oval of wood fixed on a wooden base which stood a short distance from it, and to the low shelter where, on the head of a crudely carved image, rested a whitened covered pot, and farther to the mound of earth on which stood offerings. Farther still the roots followed the path, and into the village itself, until, perhaps half a mile from the tree, they reached the Kromanti house and the village council house and the home of the chief. It was as though these roots were the arteries which fed strength to the Kromanti spirits dwelling there, and as if they brought the wisdom of the ancestors to the shelter where the men of the village gathered to hear and try cases, to discuss the will of men and gods as they touched upon the well-being of the people.

● 344 Upon our arrival we were bidden to the council house, where men and women were waiting about. This was an

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open shelter, covered by a gabled thatch. At both sides the eaves extended several feet from the posts which supported the roof, and almost touched the ground. The floor was of red clay, hardened and smooth. There were no stools about, and no other decorations. Men summoned to a council came with their own council benches. About two of the slender posts which faced the path were obias made of twined native sisal, of narrow strips of blue and red cotton, and cowrie shells. Each differed a little from the other, and each had its own potency, but what this was, none would say. On one of the crosspieces below the eaves were large balls of hardened red clay. They had been put there by the old women to await the time for molding the clay into the obia pots, which, after they had been fired, would be blackened with the soot of rice hulls and oil and refired.

Against the crossbeams in one corner of the council house the women had gathered, and at the other end the men were seated on their stools, with Captain And'u and the bassia, the man second in command, among them. While the men were discussing the Neng'e Nana, their Negro grandfathers from Africa, the women were addressing some direct questions to the white woman.

Why was she not smoking a pipe, as fitted the position of a woman of rank who was on her way to visit the Granman? What had she done with her children when she went on this long journey which took twenty-one nights and days to reach the Suriname white man's city? Did she like her husband's other wife? Had she more children than the other wife? What rank would her sons inherit from their uncles?

"How many gods have you?" one of the younger women asked.

"I have four—three Vodu, and one Apuku," another said, as though the question had been put to her, and she could say with pride that she had three snake gods, and one bush god.

The bassia's handsome wife, who had overheard the men speak of the white man's book which showed pictures of their ancestors, said, "The whites read out of books. The

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where, in the proper season, maripa nuts and rice were dried.

One quarter differed very little from another, except that in one there might grow the plant which yielded the red and black beans used for the sacred rattles, and for playing the game of adji, which entertained the spirit of the dead while the body lay in state. Instead of a house to the family gods, there might be found a mound of earth in front of one doorway, with an axe-head lying upon it as a shrine for a man's spirit, or a low forked stick sunk into the ground, holding a pot with water and weeds in it for the curing powers of its obia.

A village of any size had also a quarter in which stood the communal buildings. The council house which might also serve on occasion as the house for the dead was there. The menstrual house for the women, a small building which was recognized by a broken calabash, or a porcelain pot brought from the white man's city, lying outside the entrance, stood a little to the side. The Kromanti house, and perhaps an enclosed shelter for the bush gods who shared the shrine with the snake deities, was also located somewhere near the open communal shrine. A village wherein lived the clan head contained in addition a house for the ancestral spirits of the clan. This was called a *Fa'aka-pau wosu*, literally a flagpole house, a euphemism for the shrine to the ancestors for whom white cotton was put up on sticks. In this Fa'aka-pau wosu prayers were offered up for all the important ventures of the clan, and in time of stress a priest would come there with sacrifices, to bid one of the ancestors to enter his body and give him sight. When seizure came on, such a priest prophesied. Sometimes the ancestors were consulted in the same manner as that in which the will of the dead was ascertained. Men would take up a sacred plank and carry it in a state of possession; the elders would put questions to the ancestor who had been called. The answers were construed as favorable or unfavorable according to the way the plank tipped.

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574 there not only to tender the courtesy due the guests of the
576 tribal head, but to see that no such mishap occurred to
609 them.
643 When we had both gained the ascent, he turned to the Granman.

"Headman Yankuso, the Bak'a is before you."

As though just become aware of us, Yankuso fixed us with his eyes, fastening his glance on each in turn.

"Odi, white man. White woman, odi!"

A great figure of a man he was, as he stood there. Tall and massive of build, he towered over those who surrounded
[291] him. Barefooted like the rest, there was [redacted] his bearing which was the way of a man who was accustomed to obedience, whose word was final. He was pure Negro. His skin was dark. In his features there was no hint that the lineage of this ruler held any of the blood of the white masters, nor that his ancestors numbered among them Indians who had given way before his invading forbears. His face was impassive, yet underneath the outward immobility was an alertness which the glistening, oil-anointed skin made the more alive. His speech was measured, his words articulated with studied emphasis, which gave to each of them the value of a completed image.

"*Bari*—Cry out!" he called to the women in his vibrant voice. "Halloo, give the welcome of the bush to the people who came."

Amid the renewed cries which his command brought, we turned from the river bank and walked slowly up the path toward the village, past the silk-cotton tree, past the shrine to the ancestors, until we reached an open place on which fronted half a dozen thatched buildings.

"This is my house, white man," he said, pointing to it. "I will put you near me. I will put you in the council house."

4

●344 The council house at Asindopo Lantiwe—the village of Asin, the seat of government—was unlike any we had seen.

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Two of its walls were of the plaited palm fronds which were entwined into so pleasant a pattern on the houses of the Bush Negroes. The side walls, however, were carpentered of slats which formed a paling, and over this the slanting roof hung. Through the spaces between the slats we could see the brown feet of the passing villagers, an occasional flare of a gay tunic, or a corner of a man's cloth. Occasionally the big eyes of a child who had wandered over to the paling peered through, to see what was happening inside. Through the slats of the wall nearest to the Granman's house we saw tall earthen jars resting on a plank. There were perhaps four of them, all of varying sizes, and these held creek and river water to which the magic properties of weeds and incantations had been added.

The purposes of these slats were manifold. Not everyone could sit within the council house when the tribal chiefs gathered. Only those whose rank qualified them appeared inside when court was held. But to those sitting quietly outside those palings which formed the side walls of the house, what was spoken inside was clearly audible, and it was thus that many listened for the decisions which they awaited. Then, too, since this was an enclosed council house and when the door was open a plaid cloth hung over the doorway to insure privacy, the only light which penetrated came through these openings in the side walls. The eaves hung low, barring much of the light that might have come through the palings, and this allowed but the grayest flicker even at midday and brought into the council house the atmosphere which symbolized to them the cool of morning. The word "cool" was their image for peace, and health, and fairness, and deliberation, and justice. Inside the council house, then, was a light which "cooled the heart," for heart and head are synonymous to the Bush Negro when he speaks of emotional states.

It was not a large house, and it appeared smaller because of the many furnishings that were in it. Against the wall facing the door a number of magnificently carved benches lay on their sides, one on top of the other, there obviously

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344 352 to be admired for their artistry, but there also for ceremonial purposes which were never divulged. When one of these benches was later taken down to show the magic of paper which, placed on the top of a carving and rubbed with black crayon, reproduced the design beneath, the Granman looked startled, and then ordered that it be replaced. Nor were other rubbings allowed.

531 352 On both sides of these massed benches were many objects which could barely be distinguished in the half darkness of the house. There were guns and canisters, there were a few native brooms, and several wrapped parcels. [534] [908] There was also an apinti drum on which the gods were addressed. Not even at Ma'lobbi, where the chief, a famous carver, showed us many remarkable products of his art, did we see designs worked with the fine, sure lines or the beauty of individual motifs such as were traced on this apinti. The carving was in relief and covered the entire surface of the drum, which stood about three feet high, curving outwards from the top, and resting on a narrow circular base which raised its body about six inches from the ground. It was covered with a deerskin that use and exposure to the atmosphere had stained unevenly to shades of amber.

344 776 532 Facing these carvings was the door which, itself of wood, swung on wooden hinges of native fashioning. In relief appeared the Earth Mother, and surrounding her were the symbols of fertility. No man, not even the Granman himself, dared speak her name in this council house. At [695] trials, when oaths were taken, she might be appealed to, but to call her idly would bring down her wrath on the Granman's clan, and, perhaps not stopping there, since the council house was of all the clans, she would revenge herself upon all the people of the Saramacca River. The carving was more beautiful than on the apinti which stood against the opposite wall. The greatest artist on the river had made it.

"That man had the gods, ya-hai," the men said, when we talked of the Granman's carvings.

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AT THE COURT OF THE GRANMAN

Above the door was a shelf which did not quite reach the entire width of the wall, and on this shelf were the council benches, which the Granman supplied to the visiting chiefs. These benches were small, low, and as little ornamented with carvings as the work stools used by the women. But on the sides symbols were incised, and at least two of them we were able to identify as clan emblems. One of these had the conventionalized patterning of the hatchet, the emblem of the Granman's clan, and another a flower which is associated with the people from whose group come the principal diviners. The tops of these simple stools sometimes had inlays of dark wood, but whether their outlines were of ritualistic importance or not, no one would say.

From the beams hung several umbrellas, still inside the wrappings in which they had come from the white man's city, and a wickless metal lamp, into whose chains envelopes were inserted. These envelopes contained letters received by the Granman which awaited the coming of the missionary to be read, or letters which had already been read, and were there to add color to the official scene.

There were also other *Bakra sani*—white man's things—in the house. A canvas folding chair which filled almost an entire wall stood against the slats beside which, on the outside, were the earthen jars. This was for the Granman. He sat in it with the majesty of an emperor. No one ever approached it too closely, and we were never invited to take our ease in it when the Granman was in his own house.

In addition, there was a table in the center of the room, covered with a red and black plaid cloth from the city, and two straight-back chairs. On the table stood an alarm clock which was set for the noncommittal hour of twelve and a glass decanter filled with rum.

Chief And'u was the first to join us inside.

"It is fine here at the G'aman's."

"Yes, it is a fine house. And you, And'u, you look well in your coat. Is it when you are with the Granman that you dress so?"

/7 cont./

101 [175] [567] 4th. Bonnie /Boni/ Negroes, living on the river above Marowyne; until 1862 they were in a state of slavery among the Aucaners, but at that time, through the intervention of the government, they were released from it. Their name is supposed to be derived from a former runaway slave who had placed himself at their head.

Chapter III

Government, Laws, Administration of Justice

643 [292] Each of these tribes, except for the Bonnie Negroes, has a chief whom they call granman (governor); the uniform given to him by the government is a blue tunic with epaulets and a cocked hat with white plush.

Among the Aucaners the chief is called Byman, a cunning, courageous, and prudent man, around 63 years old.

The chief of the Saramaccaners is called Abram, an infirm old man who is very weak of character and has little influence.

The Mantoewari Negroes have a chief called Kalkoen, who, although aged and infirm, can nonetheless still be called firm of character.

631 /8/ Under their chief they have a certain number of captains and council members. The former are divided into bush captains, who take command in case of war, and into house or land captains, who deal with internal matters with the chief. The token [554] of their prestige given to them by the government consists of a large staff with a round silver ball (drum-major's stick), on which is the Netherlands coat of arms with "Je maintiendrai."

344 They have a large open shed which serves them as court and which they call kroetoehoso (probably derived from the English "courthouse").

682 Their legislation is very limited. One who kills another is punished with death; one who poisons someone suffers death by torture, provided that substantial irrefutable proof exists. (See Chapter XI below.) If the death penalty is not appropriate, the

/25 cont./

928 The peace conditions are determined in a large building
695 (shed). This shed is entirely open, they call it their court of
[344] justice, derived from kroetoe hoso or piketti (1). When they find

1. Piketti, place where the execution of the punishment takes place.

themselves there, whether this takes place after the conclusion of an internecine battle, or between spouses, members of a family, or former friends, the heads of the parties gather in the shed referred to and choose their places in the upper part of the building. Subsequently those concerned in this matter place themselves in the vicinity of the heads, and around these all those present who make up the public.

When all have been placed, one of the heads takes a cup (as a rule a calabash) filled with dram or still unfermented sugar
[769] cane. He scatters a few drops of this on the ground in various places
[782] in the shed, which signifies that their ancestors, who also once sat on this spot and passed judgment, are to be called up in the memory of all, and that the deceased, by having this offering presented to them first, have had respect paid to them.

Once this solemnity has been carried out, the cup goes around to each one, and each of those present takes a small draught from it. After it has been emptied, and none of them has refrained from drinking from it, the peace is regarded as concluded; all feuds are forgiven, and the enmity has ceased to exist.

Should it happen that one of those present refuses to drink, then he must publicly give the reason for his refusal, and then it may sometimes happen that the considerations concerning the quarrel start anew.

[693] /26/ Then the elders or council members ordinarily withdraw from the shed and leave behind only their granman (1).

1. Head or governor.

Those who have withdrawn divide themselves into different groups and consult with one another, make the matter clear and